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AUTHOR Bloland, Paul A.
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ABSTRACT

The notion that student personnel work was more than the administration of student services, that total full-rounded education and development was a legitimate concern of higher education, is not new but is a theme that has surfaced in publications of 30 or 40 years ago. What was purportedly new about the student development movement of the late 60s and early 70s was that university staff should intentionally introduce proactive programs and that the nature and content of these interventions and the outcome could be specified by designing them in conformance with an appropriate theory of human development. The student development movement grew as explicated in three seminal documents: (1) "Student Development Services in Higher Education" (Council of Student Personnel Associations in Post Secondary Education, 1972); (2) "Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education--A Return to the Academy" (Bob Brown, 1972; and (3) "A Student Development Model for Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education" (American College Personnel Association, 1975). Today there is a professional association that regards human development as the commonly held core of the profession, a journal that has apparently reoriented its focus from the general concerns of the broad student affairs field to concentrate on student development, and a profession that has committed its future to a version of its mission that has not yet proven itself and has failed markedly to accomplish its major goals. (ABL)

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Paul A. Bloland

University of Southern California

(Paper delivered at a symposium presentation, "Professional Leadership in Thought and Practice: A Critique of Student Development," at the National Convention of the American College Personnel Association in Atlanta, Georgia on March 19, 1991.)

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Let me set the stage with a little background. In the dim dark days of pre-history, back in 1947 when I was still an undergraduate, my to-be alma mater, the University of Minnesota, celebrated the 25th anniversary of student personnel work at that institution. This celebration occurred 57 years after Briggs was appointed to a position of "Dean of Student Relations" at Harvard in 1890 (that was 101 years ago!), 46 years after Thomas Arkle Clark was appointed Dean of Men at Illinois in 1901, and 16 years after R.C. Clothier, in 1931, presented the ACPA report that formally introduced the whole student philosophy to the nascent field, later incorporated into the original statement of the Student Personnel Point of View (American Council on Education, 1937). It is apparent that the field of college student personnel work has had a long and honorable history.

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These early pioneers were, implicitly or explicitly, convinced of the educational potency of the extracurriculum. The notion that student personnel work was more than the administration of student services, that total full-rounded education and development was a legitimate concern of higher education, is not new but is a theme that has surfaced in

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the publications of many of the authorities writing thirty to forty years ago. Ed Williamson, for example, talked about how "we differ from teachers in our educational role; we deal with students as individuals and groups of individuals who are concerned with many aspects of their own development. In a sense, this is the curriculum of student personnel work - the student's own full development" (Williamson, 1961, p. 19).

Kate Hevner Mueller, in her 1961 text, discussed the "theory of developmental tasks" and outlined "three major developmental tasks in the college years": 1) integrating and stabilizing the "self", 2) identifying all the different roles one may play, and 3) practicing and evaluating the activities and attitudes necessary for future roles (Mueller, 1961, pp. 108-116). C. Gilbert Wrenn, in the textbook which I used in his class in 1951, stated it this way: "Institutions of higher education are responsible for developing in their students, essential interpersonal skills and understandings as well as civic, vocational, and personal knowledges and skills" (Wrenn, 1951, (p. 25).

I cite these references simply to point out that the notion that institutions of higher education ought to have an influence on the growth and development of students has been an integral tenet of the student personnel field for at least forty years.

Was, then, the student development movement of the late 60s and early 70s merely old wine in new bottles as some critics have maintained? No, what was purportedly new about

the student development movement was that, first, university stafff should intentionally introduce proactive programs, called interventions, to promote development; and, second, that the nature and content of these interventions and the outcome could be specified by designing them in conformance with an appropriate theory of human development.

How did this shift in emphasis come about? Some trace it back to the autumn of 1964 when a student personnel dean at UC-Berkeley prohibited the placement of political tables in front of Sather Gate on September 29th. The resulting sit-in and demonstration kicked off a seven-year student challenge to university rules and authority in all of the United States.

The front-line troops for the universities were the student affairs staff because they were supposed to be the experts on students and student behavior and had carried as one of their functions a responsibility for the oversight of student behavior - one among many other duties to be sure - but now a key one as students began to flout university regulations and to question the authority of university staff. Dealing with the manifestations of the nation-wide student revolt became the primary role of student affairs administrators for years after 1964 - and of presidents for that matter.

As the campus world was gradually transformed and the role of higher education itself was undergoing critical scrutiny, the leadership of ACPA began to realize that the old patterns of student/university relationships were no

longer going to be operative, that there was a need to re-think, to re-conceptualize, if you will, the role of student affairs if there was even going to be a role after the student revolution. It became increasingly clear that simply coordinating and managing a disparate collection of services without a redefined educational function that made sense to the university community would no longer suffice, particularly with the control function radically changed.

As early as 1966, ACPA President Ralph Berdie raised the question of a need for a redefinition of student personnel work and in 1968 President Don Hoyt appointed a committee to define a new direction for the field. Clyde Parker, a member of that committee, responded with a series of papers that called for the creation of a theory of student development.

It was out of this milieu that the student development movement grew as explicated in three seminal documents: the 1972 report issued by the Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education (COSPA), "Student Development Services in Higher Education"; Bob Brown's 1972 ACPA Monograph, "Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education - A Return to the Academy", and the 1972 statement by the Higher Education (T.H.E.) Project of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) entitled, "A Student Development Model for Student Affairs in Tomorrow's Higher Education" (ACPA, 1975).

The goal of the T.H.E. Project, and the core of the concerns of the ACPA leadership, was stated in the Foreword to Brown's monograph:

> The essence of the THE Project is an attempt to reconceptualize college student personnel work in a way that will provide a measure of creative impact from our profession toward the shaping of the higher education of the future. By reconceptualization we mean the systematic reconstruction of our fundamental conceptions as to the specific roles, functions, methods, and procedures that will characterize future professional practice. (p. 4)

The outgrowth of the T.H.E. Project was the adoption and promotion of student development as the much-needed reconceptualization sought by ACPA, capped by the 1976 publication of the Miller and Prince book, The Future of Student Affairs: A Guide to Student Development for Tomorrow's Higher Education.

Catherine Plato, in an essay that deserves much wider attention than it received at the time (1978) critiqued the incipient student development movement using as her framework the reform cycle described by Theodore Lowi (1964).

> A "crisis" develops and current theory is not adequate for proposing a solution. The "old" approach is condemned and a "new" approach is advanced. The new approach is met with enthusiasm because the group has a specific need to change. The new approach becomes the dominant approach as the need for change is satisfied. There is no additional movement to find other alternatives, because the need for change has been satisfied. Proponents of the new approach can instigate very minimal reforms or they can eventually fall back into former practices without notice. The approach prevails longer than it is applicable and a new crisis develops. (Plato, 1978, p. 34)

That is essentially what happened. The crisis was the perceived changes in the functions of student personnel

staff. The old approach, student personnel work, was subtlely or directly denigrated as inappropriate. The new approach, student development, was wholeheartedly embraced and the process of selling it was aggressively pursued with very little, if any, opposition or even questioning. Because the need for reform was satisfied with the acceptance of student development, there were no alternatives offered. All the new literature engendered by the concept served simply to reinforce it, not to in any way question or challenge it. And the latest chapter in ACPA's total conversion to the concept was written when the Journal of College Student Personnel was renamed the Journal of College Student Development.

So today we have a professional association that "regards Human Development as the commonly held core of the profession" (American College Personnel Association, 1983, p. 179), a journal that has apparently reoriented its traditional focus from the general concerns of the broad student affairs field to concentrate on student development, and a profession that has committed its future to a version of its mission that has not yet proven itself and, in fact, has failed markedly to accomplish its major goals.

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